Decline in Postal Traffic Volume

892. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Universal Postal Union (UPU) of which India is a member has predicated the steep decline in postal traffic volume in developing countries due to rapid advances in communications technology field;

(b) what are the major factors identified by the UPU that adversely affected the growth in the postal traffic volume; and

(c) whether there has been improvements in mail transit/sorting and delivery of mails both in urban and rural centres commensurate with the recent increase in postal tariffs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) while there is no threat of steep decline, Technology substitution viz. growth of telephones, fax, electronic mail, interactive communication and other forms of electronic commerce in the communication market and growing competition from other service providers e.g. private couriers have been identified by the UPU as factors that adversely affect the growth of postal traffic.

(c) Improvement in transmission, sorting and delivery of mail is a continuous process and is closely monitored at different levels. Necessary steps are taken from time to time to ensure timely delivery of mail in rural and urban areas irrespective of the tariff charged.

Village Public Telephones

893. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Village Public Telephones set up during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise;

(b) the target set for the year 2002;